Welcome to PALA2017

17th International Symposium on Processability Approaches to Language Acquisition (PALA)

4/5 September, 2017

Ludwigsburg University of Education, Germany

Ludwigsburg University of Education
Reuteallee 46 | 71634 Ludwigsburg
Programme

Sunday, 3 September 2017
Time: 7:30 pm - Venue: Irish pub Towers

Social get – together at the local Irish pub “Towers”

Location: Marktplatz 2, Ludwigsburg

Due to table reservations, we kindly ask you to be right in time.
### Monday, 4 September 2017
Venue: Main Building, Room: 1.222

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Conference venue, coffee breaks and lunch:

**Conference Room: Main Building, second level, room No **1.222:**

→ Follow the signs to get there.

Coffee breaks will be outside 1.222. Depending on weather we will set tables outside in the patio. Our team will be providing you with hot coffee, cold drinks and cookies.

Lunch breaks will be in the Lit-Café, one level below. Our team will be providing cold drinks and a choice of snacks on a buffet.
Abstracts

Abstracts are ordered “chronologically”, i.e. following the schedule of the conference.

Monday

Kristof Baten (10.15-11.15)

Case in Point – The L2 Acquisition of Case: Theory, Research and Application

Recent work in PT has shown an increasing interest in understanding the acquisition of case systems in a foreign language. In this regard, a wide range of topics have already been covered. This paper will consider theoretical issues, present research findings and discuss applications for language teaching. Theoretical issues involve the (non-)existence of developmental stages in instructed and naturalistic contexts, the role of the first language in the morphology/syntax-interface, and elicited imitation as a window into developmental stages. Research findings will be presented with a focus on case in L2 German, but in light of the question of universality, reference will also be made to studies on case systems including other L2s. In terms of application, the paper will discuss the potential of the elicited imitation task for oral output practice, as well as the role of explicit information and developmental learner readiness on the L2 production of case markers. The paper concludes with a critique of the findings available and offers a roadmap to highlight potential directions for future research in the area.

Gisela Håkansson / Brownen Dyson (11.45-12.15)

Assessment through two theoretical lenses: Processability Theory and Grammatical metaphor

Processability Theory (PT; Pienemann 1998) focuses on profiling how learners acquire the L2 morpho-syntax in developmental stages, due to PT’s hypothesized hierarchy of processing procedures. In contrast, another school of thought, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL; Halliday & Matthiessen 2014), gives more emphasis to how language learners/users pack information, particularly via Grammatical Metaphor (GM), i.e. changes in word class. The principle example of this phenomenon is the nominalization of verbs; for example, development. While there is research examining language assessment in PT (Keßler & Liebner 2011) and SFL (Bonanno & Jones 2007), no study has yet compared these two approaches to assessment, although their respective emphases on structure and function suggest the value of such a comparison. This paper explores whether the two theoretical lenses of developmental stages and GM can be related. The study investigates the written essays (in total 5800 words) of twenty L2 English learners attending an Australian university entry course. The data were selected from a larger corpus of 171 texts by the method of random sampling (Shenton 2004). The data analysis establishes the highest PT-stage and the proportion of nominalization (GMs) for each learner.
For PT we applied the emergence criterion as operationalized in Håkansson & Norrby (2010), i.e. two examples with lexical or structural contrasts. To make the GM analysis consistent with PT we diverged from the current practice of calculating GM in a total database (Devrim 2015) and analysed the individual data. The results suggest that the learners’ PT stages and proportions of GM are independent of each other and hence measure different written capabilities. This finding underlines the importance of broadening theoretical approaches to the assessment of L2 written proficiency, by measuring both morpho-syntactical development and other aspects of writing such as nominalization.

References


Aaricia Ponnet (12.15 – 12.45)

The acquisition of the Hindi case marking system: some hypotheses

This paper aims to formulate some hypotheses regarding the foreign language (FL) acquisition of the Hindi case marking system. The Indo-Aryan language Hindi has recently come to the attention of language acquisition researchers, with studies on L1 learners (Narasimhan 2005), heritage learners (Montrul et al. 2012) and FL learners (Baten & Verbeke 2015; Ponnet et al. 2016). These studies focus on two grammatical structures that raise difficulties for learners of Hindi: split ergativity and differential object marking.

In Hindi, these structures are conditioned by different factors: ergative case marking of the subject depends on the transitivity/perfectivity of the verb, whereas objective case marking of the direct object depends on the animacy/specificity of the object (Kachru, 2006). As such, learners cannot rely on one-to-one mapping of form onto function but have to discern under which conditions marking occurs. The aforementioned studies only focussed on one of the two grammatical structures, and furthermore concerned cross-sectional data. In my project, I conduct a
longitudinal study that investigates both structures. Data will be elicited from Dutch-speaking and German-speaking L2 learners of Hindi.

The aim of this paper is to formulate hypotheses about the acquisition of the Hindi case system. The framework that will be considered is Processability Theory (PT) (Pienemann 1998). This theory attempts to describe, predict and explain developmental sequences, and has been applied in longitudinal studies on the L2 acquisition of languages with an accusative case system (see, e.g., Baten (2013) on L2 German). Such a study with a split ergative language like Hindi has not been conducted. Previous PT studies on accusative languages have shown that learners evolve from marking the position of the noun to marking the grammatical function of the noun. However, as case in Hindi is not just a marker of grammatical functions, but instead also influenced by lexical and discourse information, the hypothesis should go beyond the notion of case as a structural function.

References


Anke Lenzing (14.15 – 14.45)

The relation between semantics and syntax in L2 comprehension - applying the Online Cognitive Equilibrium Hypothesis to SLA

This paper addresses the question of how semantic and syntactic information are related in L2 sentence processing and what kind of information the processor initially has access to. There is no consensus on this relationship in either processing or SLA research. I adopt the perspective of the Online Cognitive Equilibrium Hypothesis (OECH) (Karimi & Ferreira 2015), which proposes a dual route in sentence processing. Its core claim is that humans have access to a semantic and a syntactic route, which operate in parallel. This means that listeners can make
recourse to both shallow processing guided by event probabilities and to deep syntactic algorithms. Adapting the OECH to SLA, I argue that the syntactic route is the locus of the processing procedures spelled out in Processability Theory (Pienemann 1998) that are acquired stepwise in L2 acquisition. I assume that the processing procedures also constrain the L2 syntactic parsing process, which implies that the syntactic route is initially underdeveloped such that early L2 learners rely on semantic processing in L2 comprehension (Lenzing in prep.). I present empirical data obtained in two cross-sectional studies of the L2 acquisition of the English passive in 60 school-age learners of English at different stages of acquisition. The comprehension data were elicited by sentence-picture matching tasks and a sentence matching reaction time experiment that provided a means of controlling for syntactic processing cues. Different types of passive constructions were included to further differentiate between semantic and syntactic processing. The results of the data analysis show 1) an implicational development in the acquisition of different types of passive constructions and 2) a correlation between the L2 learners’ stages of acquisition and their comprehension of passives. The overall results are compatible with the adaptation of the OCEH to SLA as they indicate a gradual development from shallow processing influenced by semantic cues to full syntactic processing.

References


Yumiko Yamaguchi / Hiroko Usami (14.45-15.15)

Acquisition of English Grammar and Vocabulary by Japanese Learners of English: A Learner Corpus Study

While the application of corpus linguistics to second language acquisition (SLA) has attracted increasing attention, few studies have investigated the hypotheses proposed in SLA theories based on large-scale learner corpora. Processability Theory (PT; Pienemann, 1998), a theory of SLA which assumes the existence of a universal hierarchy in second language (L2) development based on Levelt’s (1989) Speech Model, has been tested in much recent research (e.g., Bettoni & Di Biase, 2015; Keßler, Lenzing, & Liebner, 2016). However, most PT studies have been done with a limited number of subjects. Also, little is known about how the developmental stages hypothesized in PT relate to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001) which has been widely spread as a reference tool for foreign language proficiency in recent times.

This paper presents the results of part of a study using a learner corpus of English speaking and writing by Japanese learners of English in second and foreign language environments. The study aims to investigate the students’ acquisition of English grammar and vocabulary based on PT and
the CEFR. The participants were 380 Japanese university students. Data from 10 native speakers of English around the same age were collected as baseline. Each of them performed two tasks, namely spoken and written narratives, using a picture book titled Frog, where are you? (Mayer, 1969) containing 24 wordless pictures. The learner corpus including both 380 audio-recorded and transcribed spoken narratives and 380 written narratives was compiled. The results of the analyses have demonstrated that the students at the same PT stages do not necessarily show the same CEFR levels in their narratives. This suggests a need for continued research on the relationship between the developmental stages of L2 learning and the CEFR levels with larger learner corpora.

References


Massahiro Takimoto (15.30 – 16.00)

Concept projection through metaphor awareness-raising approach and the development of EFL learners’ knowledge about different degrees of certainty

The present study investigated the relative effects of cognitive and non-cognitive approaches and the relative effects of student-centered and teacher-centered approaches on the development of Japanese learners’ knowledge about the different degrees of sureness. The results indicated that the metaphor awareness-raising approach groups outperformed the non-cognitive approach and control group in writing, comparison, and categorization tests, and that the student-centered approach as well as the teacher-centered approach enabled the participants to perform. The results suggest that the metaphor awareness-raising approach using 3D image content can promote L2 language learning because of its input enhancement and concept projection through which the participants comprehended an abstract concept, namely, the degree of certainty in terms of the spatial concept of distance. The metaphor awareness-raising approach drew the participants’ repeated exposures to the forms of the target words through the visual 3D images in the animation, making the target structures more salient. Furthermore, the proximal-distal metaphor awareness-raising approach enabled the participants to connect spatial concepts with different degrees of sureness attached to the use of certain, probable, and possible items, thus facilitating deep processing of form-meaning pairings and long-term retention of memory. Moreover, the student-centered approach was just as effective since it required the participants to
take responsibility for their learning, which led them to actively participate in their learning, thereby facilitating learning. The student-centered approaches allow students the opportunity to control their learning since they require students to take responsibility for their learning, which, in turn, guides students to participate actively in their learning process rather than passively receiving information from instruction using teacher-centered approaches.

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**Tuesday**

**Manfred Pienemann / Frank Lanze (9.30 – 10.15)**

**L2 profile analysis in an artificial intelligence environment**

In this paper we will give an overview of recent developments in our new approach to L2 profile analysis, a virtual profiling system (VPS). The purpose of the VPS is to conduct fully automated profile analyses from data elicitation to quantitative and qualitative analysis of L2 development and learner variation. The VPS can be used by ESL learners or their teachers providing meaningful analyses of ESL data. It can also advise on the treatment of interlanguage features.

Data elicitation is carried out by an ESL chatbot using a battery of communicative tasks that is specifically designed to elicit relevant interlanguage data. At this stage of the project the chat is based on a reading/typing interface. For this reason we also include a test on reading speed, and response times are recorded for data entry. This permits a time-related analysis of interlanguage data yielding differential analysis of interlanguage production based on procedural and declarative knowledge.

ESL profiles are constructed incrementally by a parser that includes most morpho-grammatical aspects of English and all documented aspects of ESL development and variation. The parser is designed on the basis of PT and its application to ESL. It is capable of correcting many developmental and variational errors. This analytic capacity of the parser permits the VPS to carry out online ESL profile analyses with great accuracy - processing all data entered by the learner.

The creation of a VPS constitutes a qualitatively new stage in the development of linguistic profiling. The VPS no longer requires an intensive training of profile analysts. It can be carried out by qualified ESL teachers without additional training - as long as they are aware of the development of ESL grammar. The VPS nevertheless yields nearly 100% accuracy. It also permits learners to analyse their own interlanguage independently from analysts, teachers and testing bodies. Chatbot “talks” to them at their own level of conceptualisation, whereas teachers and analysts have access to more refined ESL concepts.
This paper is concerned with both a theoretical and an empirical account to interfaces between the descriptive scheme of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Coe 2001) and Processability Theory (PT) (Pienemann 1998, 2005). Hulstijn (2007) argued that second language acquisition theories have not been sufficiently considered in the conceptualization of the CEFR as a reference tool for language professionals. I address this shortcoming and argue that the explanatory power of PT has the potential to inform the CEFR’s concept of grammatical competence in that it a) carefully explains a universal developmental path, b) takes a learner-centred view on language acquisition, c) accounts for development as well as variation and d) uses an emergence rather than an accuracy criterion. To test this, I present an empirical study that focuses on the role that proficiency raters subconsciously assign to grammar in the CEFR’s descriptors for oral language production. I investigated the CEFR-based ratings of 53 raters on samples of both authentic oral learner language and manipulated versions of the same speech samples. With the help of an audio-software, morphological features were cut off in the oral speech data. The underlying idea of this approach is the following: if raters rate the manipulated audio file on a lower level than its original correspondent although the descriptors do not explicitly state grammar as a factor, I consider it the only variable that can be held responsible for this difference in the rating. In this way, grammar can be singled out as a factor. In the analysis, I determined the PT stages of 14 original samples using Rapid Profile and correlated PT stages and CEFR levels. Results indicate that there is a significant difference between the CEFR level of the original and the level of its edited correspondent. Additionally, PT stages and CEFR levels show a positive correlation with stronger relations at lower levels. I thus conclude that grammar plays a role in CEFR-based ratings and that interfaces between PT and the CEFR can be found, especially at lower levels. This study further addresses repercussions for general proficiency ratings.

References


Vi Thanh Son (10.45 – 11.15)

Is there any relation between Procedural knowledge and Declarative knowledge of the learners on subject verb agreement (3Sg-s)?

While some researchers emphasize the importance of classroom interaction to enhance foreign language learning (Carroll 1967; Krashen and Seliger, 1976; Krashen et al., 1978; Chihara and Oller 1987), others suggest that exposure to the foreign language outside of the classroom can give an even larger benefit (De Houwer, 2009; Moyer, 2009; Paradis, 2011; Blom et al., 2012; Muñoz 2014; Unsworth et al., 2014). The aim of my on-going thesis is to investigate children’s input (11-12 years old children) in learning English as a second language and to examine the differences between the approaches to English learning and teaching in classrooms of Swedish and Vietnamese children, and whether these affect the learning output. Two groups of L2 young learners (32 Swedish and 44 Vietnamese children) in two different teaching methods (communicative approach and grammar-translation approach) are conducted. In this study, I look at two aspects: the “procedural knowledge” (Andersson 1980:198) of the Swedish and Vietnamese children – in term of what they actually produce - and the “declarative knowledge” - in term of how they describe the rules and how they explain the reason of their choices. The target structure is subject-verb agreement in third person singular (3Sg-s). This is done by the means of individual recordings through describing a picture (measures of procedural knowledge) and the written questionnaire (measure of declarative knowledge. The performance of the children (after the recordings have been transcribed using Clan) will be compared on basis of Processability Theory (PT) by Manfred Pienemann (1998) with different stages on English acquisition as second language (L2). To compare the results between the groups and to show the relationship between the tasks of the procedural and declarative knowledge, the average test scores are statistically analyzed. This reveals a difference between Swedish and Vietnamese learners on the linguistic knowledge. Swedish children have higher scores on the procedural test than Vietnamese children while Vietnamese children have higher scores on declarative knowledge test than Swedish children. However, some of Swedish and Vietnamese children are placed in the same range (e.g. the ones who are in lower scores in both tests). It means that some children in the two groups do tend in some cases end up in the same level of linguistic knowledge and fluency. This can also be the results of different factors (classroom activities, learning environment) affecting the learners’ L2 linguistic competence. This illustrates that learning is very individual, and the learners are in the process of acquiring the 3Sg-s in which their knowledge in procedural and declarative knowledge should be treated separately.

Magnus Brolin (11.30 – 12.00)

The hierarchy of Chinese grammar: A cross-sectional study of L2 Chinese within Processability Theory

Processability Theory (Pienemann, 1998) has been applied to many different languages, there among Chinese. Previous PT-studies concerning second language acquisition of Chinese (Zhang, 2001; 2004; Gao, 2005; Wang, 2011) have explored the developmental processes of English L1 speakers, but so far, no studies regarding the developmental processes of Swedish L1 speakers have been done within the framework of PT. Hence, the aim of this work is to evaluate whether Swedish L1 speakers’ developmental process of acquiring certain Chinese grammatical
morphemes and structures correspond to the developmental stages found in earlier studies regarding English-speaking learners.

A cross-sectional research design consisting of two elicitation tasks was utilized. A total of 15 Swedish learners of Chinese (high school students and university students), between the ages 16-28, with different language proficiency in the target language participated in the study. The collected data, consisting of the participants’ spontaneous speech production of the target language, was analyzed in the search for the emergence and the accuracy of using specific Chinese grammatical morphemes and structures.

Results indicate that Swedish L1 learners follow the same developmental processes of learning certain Chinese grammar as found in previous studies regarding English L1 learners. However, suggestions of altering the locations of certain grammatical structures in the PT-hierarchies established by previous research is discussed.

References


Robert H. Taferner (12.00 – 12.30)

Verifying L2 Developmental Readiness for the Acquisition of Prepositions

This study advances the discussion of the acquisition of English prepositions within a Processability Theory (PT) framework (Pienemann, 1998). Through the mapping of double-object (Bettoni & Di Biase, 2015, pp. 38-39), ditransitive, and prepositional dative verb constructions (Wulff & Gries, 2011), evidence of morphosyntactic emergence (Pallotti, 2007; Pienemann, 1998), and S-procedure exchanges (Bettoni & Di Biase, 2015, p. 176; Buyl & Housen, 2015, p. 526), L2 learners’ developmental readiness for the acquisition of prepositions will be examined.

Diagnosing L2 development of grammatical structures that are learnable at any particular period of time is necessary for a pedagogical approach more that is closely aligned with their interlanguage (Keßler & Liebner, 2011, p. 138). To investigate the acquisition of English prepositions by L2 learners with PT, 30 Japanese intermediate-level L2 learners of English were interviewed following a protocol similar to Rapid Profile (Keßler & Liebner, 2011). The interviews targeted morphosyntactic structures found in Developmental Stages 3, 4, and 5 of PT
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(Pienemann & Keßler, 2011). The Frog Story (see Berman & Slobin, 1994; Mayer, 1969) was used to elicit structures including Wh-copula, Aux-2nd question formation, and plural agreement. Visual prompts adapted from Buyl and Housen (2015) prompted S-procedure copula and verb-subject agreement features. In addition, a sequel to The Frog Story was designed to incorporate high frequency ditransitive and prepositional dative verbs for double object constructions to emerge in learners’ oral production.

The results of this investigation support PT’s hierarchical morphosyntactic development for intermediate Japanese L2 learners of English. Many learners were at Stage 3 or 4 and not able to process Stage 5 necessary for S-procedure operations, however, higher-level processing was possible for some of the participants. These results indicate a range of language learning tasks are necessary to accommodate interlanguage variation among intermediate learners for the acquisition of English prepositions.

References


Simplification of Grammar in Learner Russian

Simplification is characteristic of Russian children acquiring their mother tongue. Yet, it is stronger and more prolonged when Russian is acquired as a second language (Ceytlin 2009:23). Until today, not much has been known about the simplification strategies of young heritage speakers (HS).

Taking processability theory (PT) as a starting point (Pienemann, 1998; 2005), the purpose of this presentation is to give an overview of the strategies applied by young learners of Russian when naming a word in a vocabulary test. 40 children took part in the experiment, among them 10 simultaneous Russian-Swedish bilingual children, 10 successive Russian-Swedish bilinguals and 10 children who acquired Russian as a second language. Their results are compared with the control group: 10 monolingual Russian children. All children were tested with the Russian version of CLT (Nenonen, Gagarina 2016).

The results showed that some strategies were common for all the children, for example, applying a ready-made construction for a particular word or borrowing ready-made grammatical structures from Swedish. However, the strategies that were common for monolingual children at the age of 3 were present in much older bilingual children.

The reasons for using sets of lexical phrases seem to be different in monolingual children and in HS. While in monolingual children it is one of the stages in natural language acquisition, in HS it seems to be a sign of attrition - when the form is still there, but the differences in meaning have not be acquired. Applying PT in the case of attritters, we argue that they first need to simplify the system and then build a new one on the base of this new simplified system. However, at this stage we still have little to say yet about the specific stages that the HS passes during this process.

Can Processing Instruction speed up the rate of acquisition? An EEG Study on past simple – *ed* by L1 German school-age children

This study tests the effects of the input-based grammar intervention Processing Instruction (henceforth PI) before, during and after the intervention, that is computer-delivered. PI is a grammar intervention that structures the input in a way that it pushes learners to map form (e.g. grammatical marker for pastness -ed) and meaning (e.g. -ed denoting accomplished past events) - something they would usually not do by default as they process input initially for meaning before they process it for form (Lee & Benati 2007, VanPatten, 1996, 2004, 2007).

According to the Processability Theory (Pienemann 1998, 2005), the feature chosen for this study -ed is acquired relatively early (stage 2). Thus, our subjects are children who are beginner learners of English as a Foreign Language, recruited in Austrian primary schools. Only subjects who will score lower than 60 % will be included in the pool. Further, they will be assigned to two groups: experimental (PI group) and control group. Subjects for the control group will have to meet several conditions: same age group and grade as the experimental group, same school type and area, and no previous PI training (both for instruction and practice) on any language feature (to avoid transfer of training effects). To provide answers to the question of whether PI would speed
up the rate of acquisition, we use a combination of advanced online measures (eye tracking, EEG/ERPs, and fNIRS) enabling us to gain more objective results about the instruction effects in real-time processing. We focus on discussing the research design of the study and present preliminary results.

**Vijaya John Kohli (14.45 – 15.15)**

abstract will be handed out at the conference
PALART book series with John Benjamins Publishing Company

Processability Approaches to Language Acquisition Research & Teaching

Editors

Manfred Pienemann | University of Paderborn
Bruno Di Biase | Western Sydney University
Jörg-U. Keßler | Ludwigsburg University of Education

https://benjamins.com/#catalog/books/palart/main

Processability Approaches to Language Acquisition Research & Teaching

5 Developing, Modelling and Assessing Second Languages
Edited by Jörg-U. Keßler, Anke Lenzing and Mathias Liebner
2016. xviii, 244 pp.

4 Theoretical and Methodological Developments in Processability Theory
Edited by Kristof Baten, Aafke Buyl, Katja Lochtman and Mieke Van Herreweghe

3 The Development of the Grammatical System in Early Second Language Acquisition: The Multiple Constraints Hypothesis
Anke Lenzing

2 The Acquisition of the German Case System by Foreign Language Learners
Kristof Baten
2013. xvii, 304 pp.

1 Studying Processability Theory: An Introductory Textbook
Edited by Manfred Pienemann and Jörg-U. Keßler
PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Please use the train/ tram route S4 going to Marbach/Backnang. Get off at “Favoritepark”.

Train: (S-Bahn - S4) leaving at

08:54am from Ludwigsburg Station on Platform 2

Get off at the next station (FAVORITEPARK). It’s only a 2-minute ride.

Returning to Ludwigsburg Station, the train leaves on the opposite platform. In the evening between 5pm and 7pm it leaves roughly every 15 minutes.

Here is the schedule for the time around 5pm:

05.03pm
05.18pm
05.33pm
05.48pm

For further information or alternative connections, please visit the website of the local transport organisation (Verkehrsverbund Stuttgart VVS).
http://en.vvs.de/home/
The Town of Ludwigsburg and Ludwigsburg University of Education

Originally, Duke Eberhard Ludwig only had plans for a summer residence at Erlachhof for hunting purposes. Following the example of other lords and the fixed opinion that the creation of a town reflected the power of the feudal lord, he then decided to build a town next to the palace. Construction works started in 1704.

One still can see the baroque impact, especially with the popular residential castle which is supposed to be a copy of Louie XIV’s castle of Versailles. Naturally, there is a beautiful garden area attached to it which is open to visitors. This park area is called “Blühendes Barock” (blooming baroque).

We also recommend visiting the old marked square, right in the heart of the city.

Today Ludwigsburg has a population of 90,000. Several tertiary education institutions offer advanced studies to the region and beyond, covering social work, film making, (the Film Academy), theatre, studies (the Theatre Academy), Administration and Finances. Ludwigsburg University of Education focuses on the study of education. Our study programmes include BAs, MAs and MEds in early child education, primary teaching, special needs teaching, secondary teaching, adult education and cultural fields as cultural management or cultural and media-education.
Room for notes

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PALA 2009 in
Ludwigsburg